

Postgraduate Study

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What is it?

'Postgrad' can mean a number of things - Postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and PhD programmes.

- *Postgraduate Diploma*
 - These may help you to become more 'vocational' - closer to fields of work, professions.
 - The subject area may be different to that studied in your first degree, eg, students with an undergraduate degree in Science choosing to do a postgraduate diploma in Business (sometimes these are called 'conversion courses').
 - Sometimes it is possible to 'convert' the diploma into a masters through further study.
 - An undergraduate degree is required, the quality of degree will depend on the postgraduate course.
- *Masters*
 - May be 'research based' or 'taught'.
 - It takes less time and is less demanding than a PhD.
 - Taught programmes generally involve course work plus thesis, the average time to complete is 1-2 years.
 - A degree is required. The quality of degree required depends on the course. For research masters a first class or upper second class honours would generally be required but in some instances a lower second class honours may be accepted. For taught masters there is more variety in the quality of degree sought from lower second class honours / pass to first class honours.

- *PhD*
- An original contribution to knowledge.
- It takes several years to write a thesis by research.
- A very good quality first degree i.e. first class or upper second class honours, is needed.

Why do it?

On a further course of study you will develop your knowledge, personality, skills and interests which could help to prepare you for making a decision and getting a job.

Three reasons for pursuing postgraduate study may be:

- "I really enjoy my subject and want to be even better at it"
- "I have found out my job prospects will improve"
- "I do not know what I want to do next - more time studying will give me the answer".

If the last options best describes you, postgrad study will not of itself resolve the future. However, you should develop your knowledge, personality and skills - and that way help yourself to make career decisions.

Where do I do it?

- Some factors to take into account when choosing to where to undertake postgraduate study:
 - Location
 - Prestige of the institution (eg UK - www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide)
 - Reputation of the course
 - Research track record of your supervisor
 - Explore the postgraduate programme through:
 - Internet - individual university web sites are very important.
 - Academic contacts - you will need a recommendation from them .
 - [Recent graduates](#) - see what NCAD graduates have done. It's important to ask your predecessors for their opinion.

How do I find out about it?

- Find out about postgraduate courses being completed at your university of choice.
- Source information through prospectuses, directories and the internet.
- Attend the [Postgradireland Fair](#)
- There are many portals where you can find out about paid PhDs, for example www.jobs.ac.uk/jobs/phd in the UK, www.intelliagence.fr/default.aspx in France or www.findaphd.com in the United States.

Paying for it

Costs

- **Postgraduate Diploma and Masters** with course work, you may have to pay in full. A few 'new skills' programmes may offer fee remission.
- **PhD:** universities may have funds (studentships, scholarships) to attract the best. Some governments advertise these also, including the [Irish Research Council](#).
- Note: 1/3 postgraduate students are funded by parents initially

Awards

Below is a list of awards generally available annually and a list of those advertised to the Careers Service.

Some Annual Awards for Ireland:

- *Local Authority Grants:*
Postgraduate students may get financial assistance under the Student Grant Scheme with the cost of tuition fees for approved postgraduate courses in Ireland and Northern Ireland. To find out more go to the Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) website at www.grantsonline.ie.
- *NCAD Awards*
If remaining in College you should investigate [NCAD Awards](#).
- *Irish State Agencies offering Awards:*
- Irish Research Council - www.research.ie
- *Advertised Awards* www.ncad.ie/alumni/opportunities for details of current awards

Moving forward

Postgraduate information is available from:

- *Careers Advisory Service.*
- Directories
- Web sites
- Booklets
- Advertised awards
- Advice on pros/cons of doing postgraduate study
- *Your academic tutor*
Your academic tutor is your best resource for academic issues. Their contribution may include:
 - Advice on making an academic proposal that goes with a postgraduate research application
 - Academic contacts
 - Referral to recent NCAD graduates / new 'postgrads'
 - Providing essential references

Action Plan

Six step plan to making an effective decision about postgraduate study:

1. Talk to academic and Careers Service staff.
2. Decide on the subject matter you would like to study.
3. Decide on the type of postgraduate programme you want - taught or research.
4. Consult directories and web sites.
5. Clarify funding options.
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6. Complete the course application form
7. Write a [personal statement](#) if required.

Related Resources

- Postgradireland.com. Postgraduate Directory of taught courses in Ireland & links to Irish, UK and international study sites.
- Prospects.ac.uk. Directory of courses & links to all UK university websites.

- [Fulbright Commission](#). All aspects of further study in US, applications and links to US university sites are [available](#) here..
- www.mastersportal.eu
- www.findamasters.com
- www.findaphd.com